

Rattlesnake Review Group Public Meeting
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Knights of Columbus
Ware, MA

March 22, 2017; 6:30 P.M.

Participants Present

Dr. Joseph Larson: Chairman, Fisheries and Wildlife Board
George Peterson: Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
Jack Buckley: Director, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Jonathan Yeo: Director of Water Supply Protection, Department of Conservation and Recreation
Anne Gobi: State Senator, Spencer
Joel McAuliffe: District Director for Senator Lesser, 1st Hampden and Hampshire
Missi Eaton: Legislative Aide for Representative Whipps
Dan Hammock: Quabbin Fishermen's Association
William Meehan: Alternate Representative for Tony Brighenti
Nancy Talbot: Selectperson and Town Clerk, Ware
Bill Barnett: Selectperson, Belchertown
Ernest LeBlanc: Athol Bird and Nature Club Vice President
Dr. Alan Richmond: Department of Biology, UMass Amherst
Dr. Mike Jones: State Herpetologist, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

1. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 6:34 P.M.
2. Dr. Larson introduced himself and thanked the audience for attending the meeting. He also thanked the Knights of Columbus for accommodating our request and allowing the use of the Knights of Columbus hall for this meeting.

Dr. Larson introduced each of the Review Group members and the alternative representatives, stating their names and affiliations, and asked each person to identify themselves by raising their hand.

3. This series of meetings has been pulled together because at the joint house and senate oversight hearing in Athol in May of 2016, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton, Commissioner Peterson, and Director Buckley all made a pledge to the legislature that a working group would be formed in cooperation with the legislative committee to review the rattlesnake project proposal. The purpose of these meetings is to solicit comments and information from the Quabbin area towns. These towns expressed their concerns over not being sufficiently consulted about the rattlesnake project, which is the reason why the Rattlesnake Working Group meetings are all being held in Quabbin area towns. However, since the formation of the Rattlesnake Working Group, we have decided not to focus exclusively on the Quabbin area for rattlesnake conservation. Instead, we are now considering all areas across Massachusetts where rattlesnakes are residing.

This is the third of four planned meetings. Although there was brief discussion about the possibility of a fifth meeting, it has been decided that there will be no additional meetings beyond the original four. Nancy Talbot questioned why there will be no fifth meeting, to which Dr. Larson stated this decision was made on the basis of the questions and comments being submitted. Submissions have significantly

slowed down and there is an incredible amount of repetition. Nancy further questioned whether the Committee should have been consulted prior to making this decision, noting that although there is a lot of noticeable redundancy, there are a lot of comments asking specific questions. Dr. Larson commented that since the public comment period opened on February 15th, there are already 20 single-spaced pages of questions and comments. Since there are no new significant submissions, we need to move forward with our process.

4. Anne Gobi motioned that the minutes of the February meeting be accepted and Nancy Talbot seconded this motion. Dan Hammock then commented that he'd like the words "by the people" added to his comment on page 6 under agenda item 11. Members voted unanimously to approve the minutes with this revision.
5. We have been collecting questions and comments via two avenues: a paper survey form that can be mailed to the MassWildlife Field Headquarters, and an electronic survey form that can be completed on our website. We are also gathering questions and comments submitted via email and letters sent to our office via fax and postal mail. The survey form contains two questions; one asking whether you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the Rattlesnake project that have not been previously covered or answered, and the second of which asks if there is any scientific evidence that has been overlooked or if you question a matter of science. A citation or a source must be provided for each scientific comment.

As of Friday, March 17th, 131 surveys (including both electronic and paper) had been submitted, with an additional 22 comments submitted via email and letters. Contained within these 153 total responses were 248 questions and general comments about the Rattlesnake project, and 11 comments questioning the scientific evidence. All questions and comments submitted are being categorized and tabulated each week throughout the duration of the public comment period. The categories consist of the following: Biology, Timber Rattlesnake habitat/population, natural history/life cycle, monitoring, alternative sites, history, conservation and management, safety concerns, program logistics, economic and funding concerns, public outreach, other species, and other questions/general comments. These categories were not preformatted ahead of time and were created based on comments submitted. All questions will be answered by category at the end of the public comment period, and this document will be available to the public. The process of answering questions by category is already underway as this is incredibly time consuming. There will be time set aside at this meeting for the audience to comment orally. These comments will be recorded on a digital voice recorder, and will be incorporated into the record with the other submissions.

6. We will listen to comments from the public in attendance at tonight's meeting, but there will be no dialogue between the committee and the public. We are here tonight to listen to you, and this portion of the meeting will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. Each person will be given three minutes to speak. If you have a longer statement, please submit it in writing.

Mike Krunklevich_Orange: I started out trying to be neutral, but as I got further into this, I got so upset. This is the most unprofessional meeting organization I've ever seen. My question goes back to the Athol meeting when Mr. Hammock asked the Chairman when the rattlesnake grant money had to be spent by, and he said it's all gone. I confronted Mr. Chairman in Belchertown about that and he said, "Oh, I didn't say that." I said, "Well I have it on CD." Mr. Chairman said, "Oh, well that's for fungus. It was only a half million." I told him it was a half million federal grant and a half million matching state grant. I told him

I'd like to see the accounting of that. Mr. Chairman said that wasn't a problem as it is a public document. I never saw the documents. I've been to all of the meetings and have collected all of the articles, all of which are on my blog (Quabbin Valley Wildlife).

Sue Grant_Northampton: Sang a song she wrote titled "Rattlesnake Refuge" to the tune of "When I Reach That City" in opposition of the rattlesnake project.

Anonymous: I've been to several of the meetings and one of the things that I thought was very important was that the public has an opportunity to speak. I have experience with rattlesnakes in MA, CT, and CA. In Massachusetts, the team I headed up captured rattlesnakes, put radiotags on them, and tracked their movements to and from their den sites. I was at the meeting in Belchertown when Dr. Jones made his proposal for the protection of rattlesnakes in MA and I support that proposal, particularly the introduction on Mt. Zion.

Charlie Comeau_Brimfield: In my job, I travel all over the country, predominantly down south. I am against the reintroduction of rattlesnakes anywhere in the state. We rid ourselves of these reptiles years ago and it serves no purpose, except for a select group that would work with them to bring them back. They will not stay on the island, and we are naïve to think otherwise. Even though they will have transmitters, their offspring will not. There is also a chance that if the state has success in the Quabbin, that they will seek other areas to introduce these poisonous reptiles as they have done twice in the past without permission. There is a reason that headless snakes have been found along our hiking trails; we do not want them around, people do not want to be around them. I like walking through the woods and not worrying that every log and every wall might have a hidden surprise with fangs that might bite me or my dog. "I don't want to live like that in Massachusetts, just for a select few to have a fun project to work on. We don't need rattlesnakes in the state. We got rid of them. We got rid of them for a reason. It wasn't an accident. ... Now you're bringing them back?" They were put away on purpose. They had a bounty on them for a reason.

Charles Comeau_Ware: Also travels a lot like his father and can reiterate that what his father said is the truth. Down south and in the southwest, you don't go turning around logs, you don't go climbing in stuff like we do up here. We take it for granted, and that's one thing I love about New England. The Quabbin is my backyard, and most of my time is spent outdoors. I'm crawling around hiking, fishing, offroading, and I don't want to be crawling around and worried about getting bit by a snake when I'm nowhere near society. You're miles away from anything if something happens. This is all because we felt it's necessary to reintroduce a species that we got rid of for a very good reason. They are dangerous. They are poisonous. Would you let your kids have poisonous snakes? Probably not. I can't believe this has even gone this far. There's a lot of money involved in this, and I can't think of a positive benefit. A couple people get to play with snakes. What if that program gets canceled two years down the road? And all of a sudden all of these snakes are just loose; nobody's tracking them, nobody's capturing them, nobody's relocating them. They're in my backyard, and that's not acceptable.

Jackie Miller_North Brookfield: I've spent many hours looking over all of the information on your website and looking over the 20 pages of questions. How many people really use the recreational areas across the state? I don't think you'd really have any way of tracking, but we have seen a lot more people of late using these areas. "If you really want to accomplish your mission to protect these snakes, they should be kept really separate from the people." I Support Mr. Meehan's idea about the "protect in place". I'd like to request more meetings, more time. There's so much information to go over. Please

take the time to implement the recommendations that you already have outlined in your fact sheet. Until you can ensure us that you've done that, why are you wanting to do anything else? "Common sense would dictate find some areas west of the Middlesex line, unpopulated areas where people aren't allowed to go to for recreation. Set up the sanctuaries. Really protect these guys." Some of these other ideas they aren't going to be protected because there are too many unknown factors. Is it possible to implement these management recommendations that have already been outlined? It sounds like you already have the authority to do that, and it wouldn't cost a lot of money. If people are one of the biggest factors killing these things, then they need to be protected. Should we take snake bite kits when go hiking and camping? Who is going to instruct us in the use of these kits? There's no antivenin at the hospitals? I can't believe it. You want to increase the snakes at all of these recreational areas which doesn't make any sense. Mt. Tom and the Quabbin have too much foot traffic. The public hasn't been sufficiently educated on this. If you did this first, it would go a long way to promote good faith among the citizens.

Peter Ulfves_North Brookfield: My biggest concern is when they say they'll be put on an island, it's not really an island, it's actually a causeway. If they're on a causeway, they can move around. What will keep them in their prospective spots?

Laurie Whitney_Ware: I am not afraid of snakes, and have actually had a fascination with them since I was a child. When I went to the meeting in Orange, someone in the audience asked if they have input in the meeting. Dr. French said if you don't have any science to prove why it shouldn't happen, they it's moving forward. This infuriated me. I began a petition because there were so many people objecting this project and they had questions. There are thousands of people who signed this petition, and we submitted it to the Governor and to our representatives showing that we're not all afraid of snakes. The fungus is real. We should be looking at putting this money toward solving that for the snakes. There will also be a loss of access to the Quabbin. I'm not okay with my tax dollars going towards this project. We should invest in the existing dens, help those snakes survive, and focus on the fungus.

Anne Stengle_Easthampton: "I've been handling, working with that species since 2009 across the state. I have handled, literally, hundreds of timber rattlesnakes alone, by myself, with no cell reception. And they are not an animal to be feared. They are far less dangerous than deer are to automobile accidents." Considering the modern medicine that we have now, the medical personnel work very well, and the new anti-venom is very affective. It is extremely rare for people to have a severe adverse reaction to these animals if on the rare chance that they are bitten. "We never had an accidental bite in the past 60 years in Massachusetts. When I say accidental bite, I mean a hiker, someone who just accidentally stepped over a log ... not someone looking to manhandle the snake. There is really no sound science that shows we should be this fearful of this species."

Kyle Welsh_Amherst: I am an avid outdoorsman, and I would love to see the rattlesnakes back. I want you to know that there are a lot of people that are really interested in this and I am one of them. I want to see this work out. I want to live in a country where maybe you have to use your brain when you walk outside, and sometime you don't live in this caudled little European garden where there's nothing dangerous, but I'd like to see some of wild critters and some of these awesome things. Have there been a lot of successful den establishments? Has this been tried with other species, venomous or not. If there were a successful population established, is this something climate change would affect individual populations (phenology, growing season days, etc)? Are we fighting a long term battle, or is this a losing

cause? Have there been thoughts about bolstering existing populations where road kill may not be an issue?

Alan Whitney_Ware: You mentioned earlier that “we” decided we weren’t having five meetings? I would have thought that was a decision for the Committee. Who is the “we” that is really running this?

Martin Fedor_Easthampton: What is UMass teaching and the research? I handed out an article titled, “Holyoke Police Snake Bite Victim Recovering after Copperhead Strike at Mt Tom.” “So these rattlesnakes that you want to put in areas where people hike, where families hike, where people bring pets, there's a problem because they bite.” Someone told us there is no medicine at the hospitals. Why don't you look to put these snakes in an area that is less populated? “Snakes don't swim.' Did they catch you in a lie? All of a sudden snakes swim. ... Snakes bite people. We put dogs down that bite people. You people want to save all these snakes. Fine. Put them in Vermont, where they're not near people.” Don't you dare put these snakes on Mt. Tom. You extorted \$150,000 out of Holyoke Gas and Electric to put up a tower. In order for them to get a permit, you forced them to spend all kinds of money to put transmitters on snakes. They're populating the mountain with snakes, and you want to put more snakes on Mt. Tom? Dogs don't know the difference between a snake; dogs are curious. They're going to get bit. Snakes bite people. We put dogs down that bite people. You people want to save all of these snakes? Fine, put them in Vermont where they are not near people.

James Vierstra_Northampton: I've loved reptiles my whole life, it's my biggest passion. We are in a very safe corner of the globe. We have these small snakes that pose no threats to us. They are not out to get us. They don't want to eat us for dinner. We owe it to them to protect them. We would be enraged if China let the pandas die out. Why can't we do our part to save this one snake?

Bernie Wilson_Ware: I have seen a wild rattlesnake in Ware. We have a \$500,000 grant. How do we go about counting rattlesnakes that are in the state right now? You are claiming a population of 200 to 400. How was that accomplished? Are there suitable denning sites on Mt. Zion? Are we throwing money away just for the sake of doing this, or will these snakes survive?

Martha Klassanos_Ware: The elected officials are between rock and hard place. You have to listen to the people. Fish and Wildlife has been doing things for a long time and nobody cares until they dealt with something that “scares people to the point of irrationality.” “Please, please, please, can we make a decision based on sound science?”

Tom Eaton_Conway: I am an active hiker. I've spent a fair amount of time hiking in rattlesnake habitat out in the Berkshires and in the Quabbin where they used to live, and I have never seen one. There's a very small population now, and even if there was a small additional population added, these are not an aggressive animal. They're not waiting to spring on people. You'll probably never see the additional ones. They have a right to live.

John Smigiel_Ware: I am an avid outdoorsman. Growing up in MA, I've realized that there are rattlesnakes that populate the state, but this has never been at the forefront of my mind when I'm in the Berkshires that I'm in rattlesnake habitat. My only concern is every time I hear about placing rattlesnakes in the Quabbin, it's displayed as being put on an island. It is not an island. There is a baffledam made of rock going to a second island, and a second baffledam going back to the mainland, which is a total distance of about ¼ mile. The habitats they like are rocky places to crawl into the rocks,

and the baffledams are constructed of rocks. I assume that would make a good den on a cold winter day when those rocks heat up from the sunlight. So the snakes would be more than happy to be in the baffeldam. My only suggestion would be if you want to put snakes in the Quabbin, you'd want to put them on an island isolated from shore, like Mt. Lizzie, Curtis Hill, Pomeroy, or Little Quabbin Hill, which are totally separated from the mainland by water. The island is off limits to humans, but the distance that the snakes would have to travel to humans is a short distance.

Andrew Ward_Hardwick: I've become very familiar with the Timber Rattlesnake over the past year as I've gobbled up every bit of information that I could find on them. What I've found is an animal that you would be very hard pressed to ever locate in the wild. To say these animals are reclusive, docile, and highly unlikely to bite people is an understatement. That's what this debate is really about. It's about public safety. If thousands of visitors to the Blue Hills near Boston are walking around a population of these snakes with no one getting bit, how are we at any risk from a smaller population being introduced to an area off limits to people? I don't think people understand that Mass Wildlife is proposing the Quabbin not to keep people safe from the snakes, but rather the other way around. After listening to a number of people who seem to be terrified of these animals, I wouldn't be surprised if a number of them would be quite happy to see this species extirpated from our state permanently. What this comes down to is that people want to be able to choose which species have the right to share our environment. We eliminated wolves and mountain lions from our forests long ago because we felt threatened by their presence. I would argue this issue is far greater than the preservation of our native species. This is about how we decide environmental policy in the Commonwealth. Do we base our decision on logic and reason? Or do we only read the cover of the book and make our decision based on fear? The risk to public safety here seems astronomically low and the concerns of many in the public seem to be based not on evidence, but instead on a popular distaste for snakes in general. Our personal fears should never supersede reality. I fully support Mass Wildlife's efforts to protect this species and every other native species that exists in our Commonwealth.

Bill Zinni_Hardwick: I own land adjacent to the Muddy Brook WMA. I appreciate you forming the working group and allowing public comment. I wanted to assure the Division that many people really appreciate and greatly value the work the Division does across the Commonwealth. Many people value the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and I want to see that continue. I count on and expect the Division to continue to perform its responsibility to ensure we do not lose our native wildlife species diversity. This is important to a lot of us. I really don't want to see rattlesnakes lost here; it's a native species. I don't have any fear of snakes; it's not a big deal to me. Any that I've tried to approach have just fled out of fear. I'd be lucky to even get a look or a photograph. There are very few places left where they can survive, and we are on the verge of losing them in our state. I know they must go down deep to survive winters, and if one gets off the island, it'll only last until about December and then freeze. So I'm not afraid. I am an example of a landowner who supports the island proposal, and any continued work by the Division elsewhere.

Doug Frost_New Braintree: I built a house on Rattlesnake Ridge and raised my children there. I spent three years at a school in CT right at the base of a mountain with a den of rattlesnakes. The only experience we had with them was the kids used to sneak out at night when they came out on the warm road, and no one ever got hurt. I spent a lot of time hiking and I never found one even though I was looking for them. They were not a problem.

Robert Cousineau_Belchertown: Read the purpose of the Committee. Since the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will ultimately make the final decision on the Rattlesnake Conservation Plan, what metric from the public comment/opinion will the Fisheries and Wildlife Board be using when determining the final decision of the Rattlesnake Conservation Plan? How will the residents know their voice is heard if you can't give them a metric of how much weight their opinion has the final decision made by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board? Is there any discussion on increasing law enforcement to patrol the affected areas to ensure the safety of the snakes? Is the CroFab Anti-venom something that all hospitals in Massachusetts have available?

Rick Romano_Hardwick: I am a local emergency room physician and have been here for 27 years. I was trained in California, and I've worked at Indian reservations in Montana and California where there were large rattlesnake populations. I've never a problem with rattlesnake bites, and I've never had to administer any anti-venom. We are more than capable of handling that locally. All of the emergency room physicians are Board certified, and we are all trained in snake bites and snake bite management. You have more of a risk from tick bites than stepping on a snake, or encountering a rabid raccoon or fox than a rattlesnake.

Sue Cloutier_New Salem: I'm a nature nut and am out looking for snakes all of the time. I've never seen a rattlesnake in the wild except the west and southwest. I've never had a problem with them. They tend to keep to themselves. I would love to have rattlesnakes right in my backyard. We appreciate all the work that the Massachusetts folks do to protect wildlife in the state and to promote education about wildlife issues. I'm very proud to be from this state.

Priscilla Maglio_Marshfield: I am concerned about this initiative that suddenly went quite last year, after first heard about it last spring. I went to the last meeting and have completed survey. I heard there were 73 responses that were not available for discussion at last meeting. I read the Timber Rattlesnake factsheet written by Mass Fish and Wildlife. The very last sentence is, "Frequent disclosure of dens and basking areas between enthusiastic individuals through verbal, photo, and digital means continues to place this species at risk." Does that mean there are more than what we know about? But if we say we see them we are putting them at risk. This says a lot about what F&W really knows about the rattlesnakes. Have you actually surveyed how many rattlesnakes there are in Massachusetts? Please describe the survey completed by MA Fish and Wildlife regarding the location of The Timber Rattlesnake. A document showing the grid plan used in the survey, the names of the employees involved in the survey and the dates they did or did not discover timber rattle snakes in MA, and please let this search be up to date with in the past three years. "Did we survey how many rattlesnakes we have in Massachusetts? I don't think so. I think this initiative is based on a false premise and I think that false premise is that rattlesnakes are endangered, and, secondarily, we need to boost their population." "I live in the eastern part of the state, where the water comes from the Quabbin reservoir. We trust that source." The water comes through open and closed aqueducts. The aqueduct opens up just like a stream. These rattlesnakes can swim. If there's a storm, a surge of water, or if a filtration screen on the aqueduct is broken, the snakes can climb right up and come through the pipes. I read that they like to live in pine forests. The snakes wait until another animal comes along and they can feel the body heat of that animal. Once they feel the body heat, they know there's something close that they might be able to get a little bite off of. And if you capture, kill, or injure a rattlesnake there will be a fine of maybe \$5,000 or \$10,000. I think there are more rattlesnakes in MA than you know about, and I also think there are more that you do know about that you don't want us to know about. "I think putting them (snakes) on the Quabbin is putting them on a highway called the aqueduct." Someone in the audience at the last

meeting told me that they like to hike on Mt. Zion. But once you put the rattlesnakes out there, they wouldn't be allowed to go out there because the rattlesnakes have to be protected. Not the people, the rattlesnakes have to be protected!

Mike Hofler_Belchertown: I'd like to talk about the Girl Scouts. When my daughters were growing up in Virginia right next to a state park where there was a large hibernacula for rattlesnakes, we told them to be respectful and careful, but not to be afraid. I'd like to tell people not to be afraid. We need these rattlesnakes as part of the diversity. I did some research and found that you're 20 times more likely to be killed by bees or wasps than you are by rattlesnakes. In America, you are three times more likely to be killed by a cow than by all poisonous snakes combined. So we need to teach our children to be careful and respectful, but not to be afraid.

Laura Cunha_Easthampton: We've heard a lot of talk about the Quabbin, but we haven't heard a lot about Mt. Tom. Mt. Tom is very rocky and there are a lot of hikers there. It's pretty hard to say you wouldn't run into one with all the rock that they'd love to stay in, and it's a far cry from putting them on an island at the Quabbin. There are people who live down the bottom at the foot of the hill and the snakes could come right down. What about the offspring? So that creates even more rattlesnakes. Plus, do we know how many are on Mt. Tom or how many you're going to put there? The population of rattlesnakes on that mountain is not very big and there are a lot of people who go up there. Mt. Tom is not a good place for the snakes.

Jim Meehan_Athol: It is evident from what everyone has said is that biggest enemy for these snakes is people. There are 440,000 square acres of property owned by the state of MA. Why would you even consider putting them in an area where we're trying to promote people to come and enjoy these spaces? Anything you read on relocating snakes, the mortality rate is in the 70th percentile or somewhere around there. It's just not the best process. Put the snakes in an area away from the population and you will have a much better chance. The Quabbin Anglers are not unwilling to deal with the endangered species; I just think you're force feeding us.

Once there were no further comments from members of the audience, Dr. Larson again indicated that there will be no dialogue between the Committee members. We are here tonight to listen only. The recording will be transcribed, and all comments and questions will be incorporated into our running list, which will be made available to the public on our website this Friday. All questions will be answered after the public comment period closes.

Anne Gobi commented that we discussed having this public comment session because members of this Committee don't know enough about the issue. We are all here to get information to try to figure things out. There will be no dialogue because most of us are not prepared to answer the public's questions tonight. We are listening to testimony to make it easier for people who didn't get a chance to submit a survey form.

7. Joe noted that well over 200 comments have already come in since the public comment period opened on February 15th. We're at the point now where there is a lot of repetition and there are essentially no new questions or comments being submitted. Due to this, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton, Commissioner Peterson, and Director Buckley decided there would be four meetings, not five, and the Fisheries and Wildlife Board accepted that advice. With that said, we need to set a date to close the public comment period so staff can begin responding to the categories of questions.

Nancy Talbot suggested the public comment period be closed one week before the next meeting so staff has one week to draft responses to the questions and provide their responses at the next meeting. Anne Gobi suggested that public comments should be accepted right up until the day of the next meeting. Commissioner Peterson stated we need to start answering the questions and documenting everything so we can get the answers out to the public. If we close the comment period sooner rather than later, we could provide draft answers by the fourth meeting and then the Committee can review those answers prior to making a recommendation to the Board. Commissioner Peterson added that we've had close to 300 questions and comments come in that need to be addressed. It will be incredibly time consuming to draft answers to the growing list of questions and comments that has already exceeded 20 pages. In response to this, Anne Gobi added that there is nothing stopping the science advisory group from working on the answers now. Anne again affirmed that comments should be accepted right up until the day of the fourth meeting. Anne motioned to move this affirmation, and Missi Eaton seconded the motion. Nancy agreed with this motion and would like staff to begin working on the draft answers immediately. Since there is not a lot of dialogue among the Committee members, a justified decision regarding this should be made at the next meeting. Dan Hammock agreed with Anne, Nancy, and Missi that the public comment period should be extended until the next meeting. The Committee then voted on this decision, which resulted in George Peterson, Jack Buckley, and Joe Larson voting in opposition, with the remainder of the Committee voting in favor. Mike Jones abstained from voting. The vote was in favor of extending the public comment period to the day of the next meeting.

Bill Meehan noted that in the first document that was sent to the Committee, it stated that answers to the questions and comments would be provided from both the Science Advisory Group and the Rattlesnake Working Group. Some of the issues that were raised at the last meeting in Belchertown involved the Environmental Police for enforcement and hibernacula in DCR properties. Will responses to the questions and comments include input from the Environmental Police and DCR? Commissioner Peterson responded by saying a lot of the partners for the rattlesnake project are agencies and private organizations that we already work with. Their input will be incorporated into the answers.

8. As discussed as part of the last agenda item, the Science Advisory Group will provide draft answers to the categories of questions for the next meeting.
9. We will send out a Doodle poll to determine the most suitable date to hold the next meeting. The meeting will be sometime after April 19th, which is the date of the next Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting. The meeting will be held somewhere on the eastern side of the Quabbin.
10. Dan Hammock stated the Quabbin angler groups got involved with the rattlesnake project because they want to jealously guard access to the Quabbin. We know there are about 29,000 fishermen who use the Quabbin. However, we do not know how many people come to the Quabbin to hike or for other recreational activities. Tourism and economics should be looked at as a science. A study should be conducted by an independent party in an unbiased way to determine how the Quabbin affects the surrounding town's tourism and economics. Dan affirmed that he is concerned with the process of this project and its review, and he advocates that we reconsider holding a fifth meeting.

Anne Gobi motioned the meeting be adjourned, Nancy Talbot seconded this motion, and members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 P.M.